

UNIFIED AUTOMATION

STRATEGIC ISSUES

Currently each state agency involved in workforce development has a stand alone automation system with limited linkages to other operating systems. This is not conducive to common intake and effective client tracking which is crucial to integrating services. To improve customer service, eliminate unnecessary duplication, and reduce costs, a common electronic system with shared data must be implemented.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

A unified automation system must emphasize system design and provide accessibility and compatibility with a variety of hardware, software, Internet, and mainframe systems. This system must provide accurate and verifiable data to improve planning and management. A unified telephone system must also be implemented.

A unified automation system must promote customer service, client tracking, and case management. To accomplish these goals it must provide a user-friendly system to allow easy access to the services, automated assessments, self-help capabilities, and local enhancements.

An effective automation system must emphasize quality and cost control to ensure accountability, cost effectiveness, valid information, and the capability to provide timely fiscal tracking. The system must be compatible with federal reporting

systems and provide flexibility in providing management reports.

STRATEGIES

To successfully integrate employment and training programs and allow for effective client tracking and common intake, electronic networks of One-Stop Career Center partnering agencies must be linked into a unified automation system. This system will reduce duplication, improve customer service, and allow for more timely services to all customers. The unified automation system must also be consistent with the Missouri Training and Employment Council Strategic Plan.

The U.S. Department of Labor has recently released draft technology plans for the new Workforce Investment Act systems that would link national, state and local levels. Below is an excerpt from a draft brief from the U.S. Department of Labor.

"The One Stop operating system should be designed to provide service to all levels of the One Stop System as envisioned in the Workforce Investment Act. The Act sees a system that at its most local level, is a network of One Stop partners connected to a local Workforce Investment Board. The Workforce Investment Board system in a State will be connected to a single State system which will be part of the national network."

"The complete system will have several major components: 1) a One Stop partner version, 2) a WIB version, 3) a State One

Stop operating system, 4) a State ES operating system, 5) State level warehouses for WIA performance information, 6) the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS), 7) linkages to the national repository for WIA survey data, 8) AJB national/state system, and 9) a series of linked association versions of the AJB software.”

COMMON ELECTRONIC SYSTEM

Presently, the bulk of the business conducted by the Divisions of Employment Security and Job Development and Training is supported by three information systems - the Job Training Information System, America's Workforce System, and **Missouri WORKS!**.

The Job Training Information System supports the Division of Job Development and Training by capturing and maintaining the data required to support the Job Training Partnership Act and the welfare-to-work program.

Missouri WORKS! is a compilation of job openings, job seeker resumes, and labor market information. **Missouri WORKS!** is an Internet based system that matches job seekers with employers and employment opportunities. There is a desire to replace America's Workforce System with **Missouri WORKS!** when the functional capacity has been created. **Missouri WORKS!** is an innovative, interactive approach to customer registration, access to job related information, training, and educational programs.

The Division of Employment Security utilizes America's Workforce System to collect and maintain information concerning the Public Labor Exchange (Wagner-Peyser).

These systems provide minimal duplication of functionality; however, the customer may be served by several of these systems.

COORDINATED JOB TRAINING CASE MANAGEMENT

Due to Year 2000 concerns, an information system is currently being developed by a consortium of states to provide One-Stop Career Center case management, known as the ALMIS Case Management System.

The One-Stop Executive Team voted to join the consortium and to implement the ALMIS Case Management System in Missouri. At this time, the ALMIS Case Management System only includes the Job Training and Partnership Act functionality, except for Title III, with the welfare-to-work component under development.

An ALMIS Case Management Implementation Committee was established to oversee the implementation of this system. The role of the ALMIS Case Management Implementation Committee is twofold:

1. To remove barriers to the implementation of the ALMIS Case Management System; and
2. To manage the scope of the ALMIS Case Management System initiative.

The ALMIS Case Management Implementation Committee should be dissolved once the ALMIS Case Management System is implemented in Labor Market Areas and One-Stop Career Centers.

CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT

In order to continue research efforts, working toward further development of a unified

automation system an Application Standing Committee should be formed. The responsibilities of the Application Standing Committee should include:

- the study and research of the potential feasibility of unifying the One-Stop Career Center partner agencies' electronic systems;
- develop a plan to link the One-Stop Career Center partner agencies;
- identify all client information, including services provided and demographics that should be available at One-Stop Career Centers;
- address a mechanism to improve customer service; and
- the review of information system proposals to ensure future integration and unification.

The goal of the Committee is unifying access to the various information systems. Its members must remain neutral to any particular technology or solution. The Committee must be free to investigate all possible solutions to the extent required under due diligence. It must be given access to knowledgeable program staff as needed. It should consist of one technical and one business-line employee from each One-Stop Career Center partner agency. The Committee should be formed by December 15, 1998, and work toward producing a proposed plan by July 1, 1999.

Missouri should look to the U.S. Department of Labor for direction and guidance when integrating **Missouri WORKS!**, America's Workforce System, and the ALMIS Common Intake information systems. The U.S. Department of Labor has indicated that funding would be made available to states that develop information systems based on the U.S. Department of Labor's One-Stop

Career Center operating system vision. **Missouri WORKS!** and the ALMIS Common Intake system implementation may allow Missouri to take advantage of U.S. Department of Labor funding sources.

CURRENT NETWORKS

Currently, the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations' agencies share a number of local area networks and a wide area network. The wide area network links buildings geographically dispersed throughout the state allowing organizations to share data maintained by various state agencies. The network should not be dismantled and all efforts should be made to share the network with the Division of Workforce Development. Separating networks must be done in such a way that the networks remain autonomous yet linked, between the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations and the Division of Workforce Development.

UNIFIED TELEPHONE SYSTEM

A common unified telephone system is the ultimate goal in local One-Stop Career Centers. There are numerous factors which are vital to reach this goal. These factors are the:

- ability to accommodate the needs of the One-Stop Career Centers for expansion;
- increase of technological compatibility with existing, collocated partners;
- ability of the telephone system to support a common switchboard;
- ability to transfer telephone calls to other collocated partners; and
- ability of the telephone system to support voice mail.

Cost sharing is one aspect that impacts a One-Stop Career Center partner agency's

decision to collocate including integrating telephone systems. There are shared billing models that can be identified for replication planning. A larger issue confronting the smooth transition to integrating telephone systems is the state's ability to provide telecommunications services to Private Industry Councils and other administrative entities that may be collocated at One-Stop Career Centers, or other locations that may desire One-Stop Career Center designation.

Efforts are underway to secure decisions from the Public Service Commission to define the boundaries within which the state can provide services to defined quasi-governmental administrative entities without certificate of service authority from the Commission. Although there appears to be authority for the state to provide telecommunication services to Private Industry Councils, the ability to serve other local administrative entities is questionable. The One-Stop Executive Team may issue a policy statement that would direct agencies to share telephone systems where economically feasible. Each One-Stop Career Center should utilize equipment that can be upgraded to accommodate the needs of current and future partners.

The electronic infrastructure that connects One-Stop Career Center partner agencies is vital to the success of the new Workforce Development System. This automation connection allows for the timely and consistent flow of information and produces efficiencies by reducing inappropriate duplication. Allowing One-Stop Career Center partners, through the use of automation, to serve their customers more effectively.

Source of Information: Unified Automation Taskforce [Appendix p. 135] and the Workforce Development Transition Team